



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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October 23, 2002

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist 

RE: Site Inspection, Absolute Mining and Minerals, Dolores River Placer Project, S/019/035, Grand County, Utah

Date of Inspection: October 18, 2002  
Time of Inspection: 9:15 to 11:45 a.m.  
Conditions: Clear, 60's  
Participants: Lyn Kimball and Dale Snyder, AMMI; Paul Baker, DOGM

## Purpose of Inspection:

In 1999, a Notice of Agency Action was issued to the operator for exceeding five acres of disturbance without first permitting the site as a large mining operation. The operator chose to reclaim enough area to reduce the size of the disturbed area to less than five acres, and the purpose of this inspection was to look at those areas that had been regraded and to seed these areas.

## Getting to the site:

The report for the May 2002 inspection describes how to get to the site. We got there a different way this time, but it includes two fords of the Dolores River that could not be made if the river was high at all. Although it has been a very dry summer and fall, the water was nearly up to the doors in my pickup. Go 1.1 miles from the Dewey Bridge and turn left onto a well maintained dirt road. Follow this road for 4.3 miles, including the first ford, and turn right toward the river and the second ford. For the second ford, you have to go up the river for about 100 yards. Once on the other side, turn left onto the main road, and you're essentially at the gate.

## Observations:

The two areas that were supposed to have been reclaimed have been graded to blend in with surrounding areas. In the lower area near the shop, there had been some tanks and other equipment, and these have been moved to another site within the disturbed area. The two regraded areas were roughened and ready to be seeded except that the surface was crusted.

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In the lower area, Mr. Snyder first dragged the surface with the teeth of the bucket on a front end loader then Mr. Kimball and I seeded this area. Mr. Snyder later came back and dragged it with the teeth of his loader again, trying to keep the resultant furrows as close to parallel to the contour as possible. Mr. Kimball and I seeded the upper area before it was dragged. Mr. Snyder was not able to keep all the furrows parallel to the contour in this area but did the best he could.

The seed mix used was verbally approved by the Bureau of Land Management. The species in the mix are fourwing saltbush, shadscale, Indian ricegrass, thickspike wheatgrass, winterfat, and Palmer penstemon. All of these species are native to the area.

The reclaimed areas are fairly flat, so although the roughening was not real deep, I believe it will be adequate to hold most of the water in these areas.

I could see no other changes to the site compared with previous inspections.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Tony Gallegos created a map showing those areas that needed to be reclaimed, and I compared this map with those areas that were actually reclaimed. The operator has completed the reclamation work that was required and may have done some work on top of the hill that was not required.. The additional areas may have been disturbed by recreationists, and I suspect they may be redisturbed by these same people.

Although I did not use a GPS unit to remeasure the size of the disturbed area, we took time to find the disturbed area boundary marker stakes. Much of the area outside the disturbed area has been disturbed by previous mining operations, but I could see no signs of redisturbance.

We discussed future mining operations, and I emphasized that any disturbance outside the marked disturbed area must be approved before the disturbance occurs. Mr. Snyder asked about doing some gratuitous regrading work on some of the tailings in the area, and I said I have no problem with this as long as it is not associated in any way with mining. I emphasized that before they do any work of this nature, it is important to inform the Division and to contact the BLM to ensure they have no concerns about the work that would be done.

Based on the work that has been done, I recommend that the Division terminate the Notice of Agency Action.

jb

Enclosure: site photos

cc: Denice Swankey, Moab BLM

Dale Snyder and Lyn Kimball, AMMI

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## ATTACHMENT

### Photographs

S/019/035, Dolores River Placer Operation, Absolute Mining and Minerals, Inc., October 18, 2002

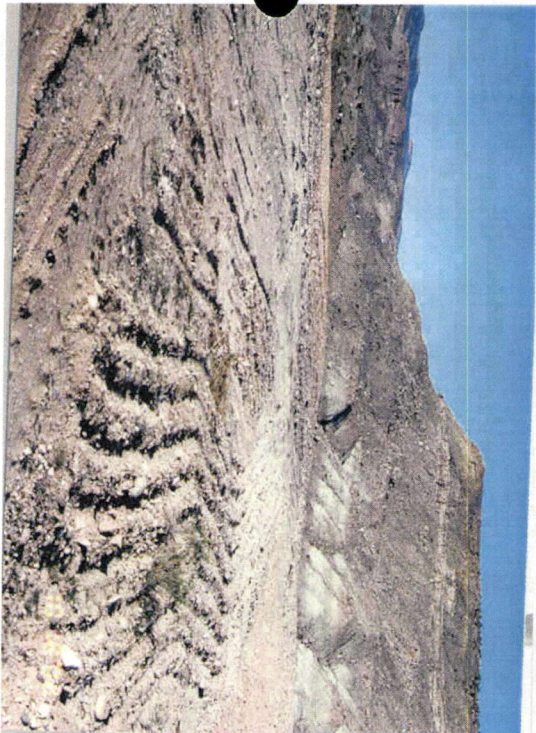


Photo 1. Reclamation on top of the hill.



Photo 3. Lower reclaimed area.



Photo 2. The lower reclaimed area is above and to the left of the loader.